



## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 11, 2015

9-11 a.m.

James R. Thompson Center, Chicago

**Attendance:** Kate Maehr, Janice Glenn, Ahlam Jbara, Amy Rynell, Angel Gutierrez, Barbara Karacic (phone), Bert Weber (IL Dept. on Aging, phone), Dan Lesser, Esperanza Gonzalez, Gary Tomlin, Janine Lewis (phone), Karen Lehman, Michael Miller (phone), Layla Suleiman-Gonzalez (phone), Leah Bradford, Mark Haller (phone), Onie Riley (phone), Brendan Dailey, Bridgett Stone, Brian Colgan. Non-Commissioners: Tom Browning, Terri Nally, Steven McCullough, Bob Dolgan, Rebecca Frazin.

### I. Welcome

Kate Maehr welcome new members of the Commission including new Co-Chair Janice Glenn, Director of Diversity and Recruitment for Governor Bruce Rauner's office. Janice comes from Leadership Greater Chicago, where she helped individuals develop their career paths, including a focus on the most vulnerable in our community. Janice stated that ending hunger is something we can do throughout the state and shared her excitement in collaborating with Commission members.

Kate stated that there will be a time in the near future when Commissioners can learn in detail about the history of the Commission and gain further perspective on the work. The Commission has chosen to attack the work by splitting into three Working Groups. It also holds an annual summit. We have made an impact but there is a lot to do.

### II. Minutes from last meeting

Angel Gutierrez motioned to approve, Leah Bradford seconded.

- ### III. Recent data on hunger and poverty –
- Bob Dolgan of the Greater Chicago Food Depository shared a summary of recent reports on hunger and poverty in Illinois, beginning with the Illinois School Breakfast Report 2013-2014, released in February 2015. The report shows that while progress has been made, 446,000 low-income children who are eligible in the state for school breakfast do not receive it. The Rise and Shine Illinois Campaign recommends the full implementation of the Community Eligibility Provision at eligible schools statewide and improvements to the Illinois School Breakfast and Lunch Act to serve more breakfasts. Additionally, in March 2015, Voices for Illinois Children released the 2015 Kids Count report on child poverty in Illinois. The data shows that 21 percent of Illinois children lived in households with incomes below poverty level in 2013. The number of children living in poverty increased from 457,000 in 1999 to 634,000 in 2012. In April, Feeding America released Map the Meal Gap 2015 which showed that more than 1.75 million people in Illinois are food insecure, meaning 13% or 1 in 7 of the state's population experiences limited or uncertain access to adequate food. Food insecurity

disproportionately affects children—643,040 children in Illinois are food insecure—1 in 5. Finally, the Summer Nutrition Report, released by the Food Research and Action Center, shows that Illinois ranks 28<sup>th</sup> in the nation for its ratio of summer participation to the National School Lunch Program. Only 14.8% of children who participated in the National School Lunch Program in 2014 also participated in the summer program.

Amy Rynell added that the deep poverty level continues to grow in the state. People continue to face difficult decisions between paying for rent or paying for food, and paying for medicine and paying for food. Heartland Alliance ranked Illinois on 30 indicators regarding food insecurity and found that Illinois is making in-roads though trails nearby states such as Michigan.

Amy also shared that there would be opportunities to testify at upcoming Illinois Poverty Commission hearings and to amplify the joint work of the Poverty Commission and the Commission to End Hunger. Dan Lesser added that the listening tour the Commission to End Hunger held in 2011 was very beneficial—he visited sites in East St. Louis and Rockford.

Esperanza Gonzalez added that she would be willing to do a site visit again.

#### **IV. Work Group Reports**

- a. **No Kid Hungry Work Group** – Tom Browning of Illinois Action for Children reported on the activities of the No Kid Hungry Work Group with a focus on summer meals. Tom shared that 85% of children in the state may not know where they are going to get food in the summer months when school ends. Tom shared that 10 of 12 summer kickoff events have been held statewide and that the Chicago event is June 24 in Dunbar Park. There are a number of social media and other awareness tools to help raise awareness of summer meals. Brian Colgan asked if school districts help in getting the word out to children. Tom shared that Chicago Public Schools does but that there are opportunities with other school districts. Brian also asked about state agency collaboration. Bob shared how the USDA, ISBE and No Kid Hungry work to plan for summer year-round, including having facilitated meetings as a result of Illinois' status as a targeted assistance state. Kate stated that the summer effort is a great example of collaboration across the state. Mark Haller added that ISBE can get sites and up and running through June 15. Layla Suleiman-Gonzalez and Ahlam Jbara stated they would like summer materials for dissemination in Joliet and Chicago, respectively. Tom also discussed the school breakfast resolutions that recently passed the Illinois General Assembly. The resolutions state that the No Kid Hungry Working Group will research the feasibility of an update to the Illinois School Breakfast and Lunch Act and make a recommendation regarding potential legislation to the General Assembly by the fall. Tom also noted that the next federal Child Nutrition Reauthorization expires Sept. 30, 2015.
- b. **Benefits Access Working Group** – Dan Lesser discussed SB1847, which has the potential to extend benefits for 40,000 families in Illinois. The bill has passed the Senate and House and has been sent to the Governor. SNAP is 100% federally funded, and the bill would bring \$60M into the state and have an economic multiplier effect. Dan shared that there is a sign-on letter available. Kate added that retailers are in support of this legislation. Kate thanked Dan for all of his work on the bill and noted that Working Groups have the opportunity to maximize federal nutrition programs. Dan noted that

the phone calls and other communications made an impact and led to the House Human Services Appropriations Committee hearing the bill. Steven added that the Benefits Access Working Group will be reactivating as new IDHS staff gets up to speed.

- c. **Emergency Food System Work Group** – Karen Lehman reported on the Work Group sharing that there is food that is being wasted in Illinois that doesn't need to be wasted. Food banks can be food aggregators and shape a system that enables food to be taken out of the field. In conversations with farmers, they are offended that food banks are not getting food. The Work Group's recent survey of specialty growers shows they care about saving food and are open to pilot of a food bank project. Feeding Illinois submitted a Letter of Intent for Feeding America's Produce Enterprise Strategy pilot, and the letter was approved. The letter creates a groundwork for what we are trying to accomplish. Terri Nally of Feeding Illinois reported that she submitted the proposal to FA on June 2, including the agricultural surplus initiative, and had the assistance of three Work Group members. Kate noted Ohio's ag surplus program and that it collects 29 million pounds of produce through the Ohio State Food Bank Association. Mike Miller added that Ohio receives \$14 million in the biannual state budget for the program. Terri added that the Work Group is looking at regions and developing partnerships with food banks and other partners. The Farm Bureau is developing a food hub in Rantoul with cold storage and potential to aggregate for food banks. Esperanza Gonzalez stated that 65,000 migrants come to Illinois to pick crops and detassle corn and yet they cannot take any food from the fields, though they use pantries across the state. Kate added that the surplus program would be for everyone, including urban areas and rural communities. Terri stated the rules for migrants are the rules of farm enterprises, and that migrants would have the same access to pantries as other minimum wage workers. IDNR has potential to lease out agricultural land. Bob added that Illinois Department of Agriculture has a seat on the Commission, and he will follow up.

## V. Updates

- a. **Hunger Summit** – Janice Glenn reported on the Hunger Summit, stating that 300 people attended this year and shared her enthusiasm for 600 people attending next year. Janice shared highlights from sessions including a session on school nutrition that featured Decatur's Breakfast in the Classroom efforts. Another session focused on the intersection of hunger and health and how food impacts everything. Amy stated there was a desire among attendees to connect with other people who do the work and share best practices and connection with other parts of the state. Steven added that this summit had more non-pantry folks than ever. There is interest in hunger among older adults, and Bert Weber of the Department on Aging stated that he would like to work to help improve nutrition. Mike added that transportation is a big part of the challenge with providing for older adults.
- b. **Commission Report** – Bob shared plans for the next Commission to End Hunger Report, which is required annually for the Governor and General Assembly. The next Report is being drafted and will be sent to Commissioners in advance of June 30. The release of the Report will be timed with September-Hunger Action Month to help draw attention to the issue.
- c. **Other** – The group discussed having all upcoming Working Group dates sent out so they could attend meetings. An additional question came about state budget impacts on

hunger, and Kate added that most nutrition programs are federally funded. Tom discussed the proposed reductions to the child care assistance program and potential impacts on nutrition. The No Kid Hungry Working Group has been tracking the issue. It was decided the Working Groups would compile notes on state budget impacts and share with everyone. Brendan Dailey will look into the acreage available for agriculture within IDNR. He also brought information about Illinois Sportsman Against Hunger, which brought in 25,000 lbs of meat through the deer harvest. Brendan will join the Emergency Food System Working Group moving forward.

- VI. **Next steps** – Kate thanked everyone for their work and discussed the next meeting Thursday, Nov. 5. We will look to hold the meeting in Central Illinois, perhaps Springfield.